



Bayou LaBranche Wetland Creation (PO-17)

Project Status

Approved Date: 1991 **Cost:** \$3.67 million
Project Area: 487 acres **Status:** Completed
Net Benefit After 20 Years: 203 acres April 1994
Project Type: Marsh Creation

Location

The project is bounded by U.S. Interstate 10 to the south and Lake Pontchartrain to the north. It is approximately 3 miles northeast of Norco, Louisiana, in St. Charles Parish.

Problems

Construction of Interstate 10 (with its associated construction access canals), the Illinois Central Railroad, and an abandoned agricultural development resulted in altered hydrology and increased salinity.

The primary cause of wetland loss in the area was the failure of agricultural impoundments and subsequent flooding.

An unnamed hurricane in 1915 and Hurricane Betsy (1965) caused salt water to overflow the banks of Lake Pontchartrain and flow unchecked through canals. This overflow resulted in excessive salt water in the project area marsh and a subsequent loss of intermediate marsh vegetation.

Restoration Strategy

The project's goal was to create an area of 70% land and 30% water within 5 years of construction. Depositing 2.7 million cubic yards of sediments dredged from Lake Pontchartrain within an earthen containment berm created new, emergent marsh in what had formerly been an open water area.

Project effectiveness was evaluated by monitoring emerging wetland vegetation growth, water quality, and both the elevation and compaction rates of the deposited sediment.



Aerial view looking north depicting the marsh created within the Bayou LaBranche project area. Lake Pontchartrain is in the foreground, U.S. Interstate 10 can be seen running east to west near the top, and the emergent marsh (open water prior to 1994) is the large, vegetated area in the center.

Progress to Date

Land and water analysis in 1997 showed 300 acres of open water had been converted to land 3 years after construction was completed in 1994. The project had created 80% land and 20% percent water in 3 years, which is well within the target schedule. As of January 1999, sediment elevation was within target range at all monitoring stations.

The construction phase of the project is complete. Monitoring is underway by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. No operation or maintenance is scheduled. This project is on Priority Project List 1.

For more project information, please contact:



Federal Sponsor:
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 New Orleans, LA
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Local Sponsor:
 Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
 Baton Rouge, LA
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Lake Pontchartrain



Bayou LaBranche Wetland Creation (PO-17)

-  Marsh Creation Area
-  Project Boundary

USGS
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200 0 200 400 600 Feet
200 0 200 Meters

Map Produced By:
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
National Wetlands Research Center
Coastal Restoration Field Station

Background Imagery:
1998 Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quadrangle

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